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Recognise speech in stories

Getting you thinking

In *Tunnel of Terror* Jim and Karl are riding a ghost train at midnight. Something seems to be wrong.

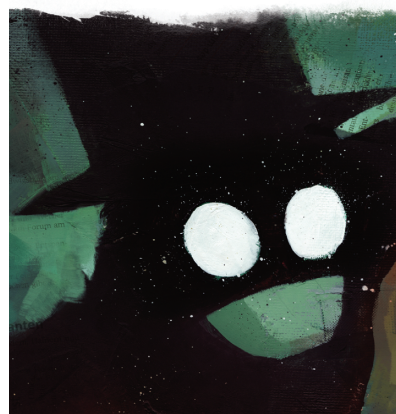
Another door opened at the other end of the platform. A car shot through and stopped right in front of Jim and Karl.

'It's empty,' Jim said.

'Yeah, so?'

'Well ... where did the people go? Isn't this the only way off and on?'

Karl shrugged. 'They probably got off somewhere else.' He jumped down into the car. 'Now come on, let's get this over with.'



- 1 What do you notice about how the speech is set out in the example above? Discuss your ideas with a partner.

How does it work?

If speech is set out correctly, it makes it easier to understand when people are speaking.

Whenever someone speaks in a story, the writer starts a new line. The writer puts speech marks ('...') around what that person says.

Now you try it

1.5

- 2 Jim and Karl are now in the ghost train. They have just passed some skeletons. Put in speech marks where you think people are actually speaking.

They were pretty good, Jim admitted, as the light went out again. They looked almost real.

Another scream echoed along the dark passageway. This time both boys jumped.

That one sounded better, Karl said.

Yeah, Jim nodded, and a cold breeze tickled his neck. They sounded really scared, didn't they?

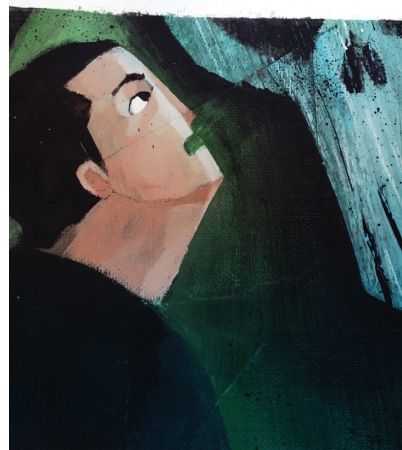
Karl didn't answer. The only sound in the tunnel was the creaking of the car along the track.

Don't you think? Jim said.

Karl still didn't answer.

Karl?

Tunnel of Terror by Barry Hutchison



Apply your skills

- 3 Imagine what will happen next in *Tunnel of Terror*. Think carefully about what Karl and Jim would say to each other. Write three or four sentences using speech marks.

Check your progress:

Good progress >>

I understand that a writer uses a new line for speech in stories as well as speech marks.

Excellent progress >>>

I can write and correctly set out speech in stories.

Write with technical accuracy of syntax and punctuation in phrases, clauses and sentences

Recognise the present and the past tense in stories

Getting you thinking

Look at the example below taken from a story called *Cyber Shock*. Mark is tackled in a game of football. He's hurt.

His trousers were torn, and I expected to see loads of blood where he'd cut himself – but there was none of that. Mark's skin was ripped back and, inside his knee, there was a long, metal bar and loads of coloured wires. There was even a tiny circuit board, like the one you get in computers.

Cyber Shock by Tommy Donbavand

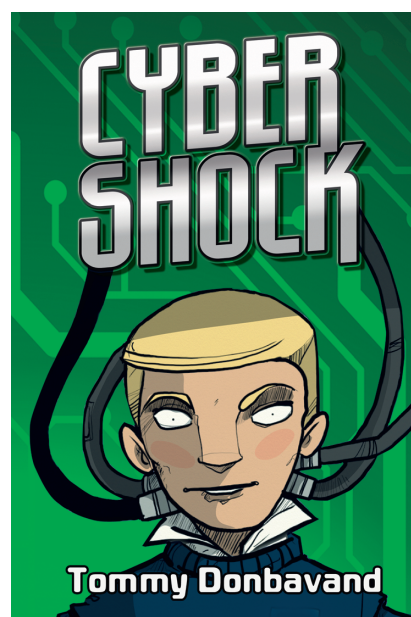


- 1 Is the example above written in the present or the past tense? Discuss your ideas with a partner.

How does it work?

Some stories are written in the present tense. They use verb forms such as *is*, *are* and *look*.

Some stories are written in the past tense. They use verb forms such as *was*, *were* and *looked*.



Now you try it

2 .1

- 2 Write about something that happened to you yesterday. Use just three or four sentences and write in the past tense. With a partner, underline the words in your writing that show it is in the past tense.

Apply your skills

- 3 Here is another story. This one is written in the present, as if it is happening now. Which words tell you that the story is about something that is happening now?

I can see the boy in black. He's ugly and big and scary. He's the leader of the gang. I've got to avoid him... somehow. I hear a noise and turn quickly. Other members of the gang are behind me. I'm trapped!

- 4 Write four or five sentences in the present tense, about somebody who faces danger.



Check your progress:

Good progress >>

I can recognise the past and present tense in stories.

Excellent progress >>>

I can write using the past and the present tense.

Vary sentences for clarity, purpose and effect